04 Kamsa Begins His Persecutions

from the Krsna Book Chapter 4 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

(Ominous music may be used throughout the play.)

Narrator: The evil Kamsa had usurped the throne of his father, Ugrasena and imprisoned his sister Devaki and brother-in-law, Vasudeva. A celestial voice had warned Kamsa that the eighth child of Devaki would kill him. Therefore, Kamsa had cruelly killed six sons of Devaki, as soon as they were born.

The seventh child was said to be a miscarriage but actually, the seventh son of Devaki, Balarama, had been transferred to the womb of Devaki, another wife of Vasudeva, who was living in Vrndavana.

When the eighth child, Krsna, was born, Vasudeva exchanged Krsna for the daughter of Yasoda in Vrndavana. Thus, Krsna and Balarma could grow up safely in Vrndavana, far from Kamsa and his followers. Kamsa was baffled by this, and released Devaki and Vasudeva from prison.

But, the next day Kamsa called all his counselors together and narrated to them all the incidents that had happened the night before. All the counselors of Kamsa were demons and eternal enemies of the demigods, so they became depressed upon hearing their master speak of the night's events. Although they were not very much experienced or learned, they began to give instructions to Kamsa as follows:

1st Demon: Dear sir, let us now make arrangements to kill all children who were born within the last ten days in all towns, countries, villages and pasturing grounds! Let us execute this plan indiscriminately! We think that the demigods cannot do anything against us if we perform these atrocities. They are always afraid of fighting with us, and even if they wish to check our activities, they will not dare to do so.

Because of the immeasurable strength of your bow, they fear you. Indeed, we have practical experience that whenever you stood to fight with them and began to shower your arrows on them, they immediately begin to flee in all directions just to save their lives!

Many of the demigods were unable to fight with you, and they immediately surrendered themselves unto you by opening their turbans and the flag on their heads. With folded hands they begged you to spare them and said, 'My lord, we are all afraid of your strength. Please release us from this dangerous fight!!'

2nd Demon: We have also seen many times that you would never kill such surrendered fighters when they were all fearful, their bows, arrows and chariots broken, forgetful of their military activities and unable to fight with you.

So, actually we have nothing to fear from these demigods. They are very proud of being great fighters in peacetime outside of the field of battle, but actually they cannot show any talent or military power on the warfield.

3rd Demon: Although Lord Visnu, Lord Siva and Lord Brahma are always ready to help the demigods headed by Indra, we have no reason to be afraid of them! As far as Lord Visnu is concerned, He has already hidden Himself within the hearts of all living entities, and He cannot come out. As far as Lord Siva is concerned, he has renounced all activities; he has already entered into the forest. And Lord Brahma is always engaged in different types of austerities and meditation. And what to speak of Indra - he is a straw in comparison to your strength!

Therefore, we have nothing to fear from all these demigods. But, we must not neglect them because the demigods are our determined enemies. We must be careful to protect ourselves. To root them out from their very existence, we should just engage ourselves in your service and be always ready for your command.

4th Demon: If there is some disease in the body, which is neglected, it becomes incurable. Similarly, when one is not careful about restraining the senses and lets them loose, it is then very difficult to control them at all. Therefore, we must always be very careful of the demigods before they get too strong to be subdued.

The foundation of strength of the demigods is Lord Visnu, because the ultimate goal of all religious principles is to satisfy Him. The Vedic injunctions, the brahmanas, the cows, austerities, sacrifices, performances of charity and distribution of wealth are all for the satisfaction of Lord Visnu.

So, let us immediately begin by killing all the brahmanas who are in charge of the Vedic knowledge and the great sages who are in charge of sacrificial ritualistic performances.

Let us kill all the cows, which are the source of butter, which is so necessary for performing sacrifices. Please give us your permission to kill all these creatures!

3rd Demon: Actually the limbs of the transcendental body of Lord Visnu are the brahmanas, the cows, Vedic knowledge, austerity, truthfulness, sense and mind control, faithfulness, charity, tolerance and performance of sacrifices.

Lord Visnu is situated in everyone’s heart and is the leader of all demigods, including Lord Siva and Lord Brahma. We think that to kill Lord Visnu is to persecute the great sages and brahmanas!!

Kamsa: (happily) Ha ha ha! Yes! You are right, certainly! Why didn't I think of this earlier?!

Send demons everywhere and kill kill kill the sages, the brahmanas and the cows!! Ha! (Ominous music intensifies. Laughing and congratulating each other, the demons exit.)

Narrator: Thus being advised by the demoniac ministers, Kamsa, who was from the very beginning the greatest rascal, decided to persecute the brahmanas and Vaisnavas, being entrapped by the shackles of all-devouring, eternal time. He ordered the demons to harass all kinds of saintly persons, and then he entered his house.

The adherents of Kamsa were all influenced by the modes of passion as well as illusioned by the modes of ignorance, and their only business was to create enmity with saintly persons. Such activities can only reduce the duration of life. The demons accelerated the process and invited their deaths as soon as possible. The result of persecuting saintly persons is not only untimely death. The act is so offensive that the actor also gradually loses his beauty, his fame and his religious principles, and his promotion to higher planets is also checked. Driven by various kinds of mental concoctions, the demons diminish all kinds of welfare.

An offense at the lotus feet of the devotees and brahmanas is a greater offense than that committed at the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus, a godless civilization becomes the source of all calamities.